System Configuration Team (SCT)

Reasonable & Prudent Measure #26
Meeting Notes
October 20, 1999

DRAFT

Greetings and Introductions.

The October 20 meeting of the System Configuration Team was held at the Northwest Power Planning Council offices in Portland, Oregon. The meeting was co-chaired by Bill Hevlin of NMFS and Jim Ruff (also now of NMFS), and was facilitated by Cathryn Collis. The agenda and a list of attendees for the October 20 meeting are attached as Enclosures A and B.

The following is a distillation (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed at the meeting, together with actions taken on those items. Please note that some enclosures referenced may be too lengthy to routinely include with the meeting notes; copies of all enclosures referred to in the minutes are available upon request from Kathy Ceballos of NMFS at 503/230-5420.

Hevlin noted that the minutes from the August 26, September 14 and September 24 SCT meetings are now available; he asked the other SCT members to review these documents and provide any changes they may have to him.

Ron Boyce suggested that it would be appropriate for the SCT to receive periodic updates on the FY'00 CRFM budget -- contract status, expenditures, performance and execution, etc. Good idea, Hevlin replied.

I. John Day Surface Bypass Development.

NMFS' Steve Rainey distributed Enclosure C, a brief description and site plan of the 2002 John Day surface bypass prototype project. As most of you are aware, Rainey said, there has been considerable discussion of John Day configuration items at recent SCT and FFDRWG meetings; in particular, there has been some discussion of whether e-screens or surface bypass

should be the priority at John Day. At the last FFDRWG meeting, there was also a good discussion of the raised crest/spill bay 20 option which the Corps has been studying, he said.

One of the things that came out of that FFDRWG discussion is the fact that the cost of installing a permanent raised-crest installation at John Day's spill bay 20 would be $6 million-$9 million; the cost of a prototype installation would likely be incrementally less than that, Rainey said. It became apparent, in the course of the discussion at that meeting, that one of the things we don't know at John Day is the extent of the incremental benefit, and the response of juvenile fish in the forebay, to the surface-oriented flow field that could be provided with a 14 Kcfs raised-crest spill bay 20 option, Rainey said. That's the kind of thing we need to take an intermediate look at before we make a decision on, for instance, a $60 million skeleton bay at that project.

The thinking is that, if we go forward with this raised crest prototype in 2002, that will allow us to confirm whether or not the fish will respond favorably to a strong forebay flow-field, Rainey continued. At that point, we will have more information from the extended screen prototype studies, as well as results from a couple of more years of 24-hour spill studies at John Day. The 14 Kcfs raised crest prototype will serve as something of a surrogate for the flow field provided by the 18 Kcfs skeleton bay, Rainey said, so by the end of the 2002 test period, all of this information will come together. We can then synthesize it to make a more informed determination of the incremental benefit of these surface bypass items, and a more informed decision about how we want to spend our dollars on fish passage improvements at John Day, Rainey said.

The group asked Rainey a few technical questions about the prototype design; ultimately, he said the main point of his presentation today is that $60 million for a single skeleton bay is a pretty daunting investment, given the fact that it is unknown, at this point, how fish will respond to that structure. We feel the raised-crest spill bay will allow us to look at how the fish will respond to a surface-oriented flow field at John Day, at much less cost, Rainey said.

In response to a question, the Corps' John Kranda said the cost of the FY'00 model studies and FDM preparation work for the prototype raised crest spill bay project at John Day is estimated to be about $460,000; this would replace the $250,000 line-item shown in the FY'00 spreadsheet for the evaluation of the spillway modification alternative at John Day. Then, in FY'01, the Corps will need an as-yet unknown amount to develop the prototype raised-crest spill bay design.

It was noted that CRITFC is recommending that the Corps accelerate the schedule to complete the plans and specs for the raised spillway crest prototype in FY'00, such that the prototype could be tested in FY'01; Hevlin distributed copies of an October 11 memo from Tom Lorz and Bob Heinith explaining CRITFC's position. Has there been any discussion, within the Corps or NMFS, of accelerating this work? asked BPA's John Rowan. If it was decided that this is vitally important, it should be possible to do that work in FY'00 and FY'01, said Rainey; however, that would mean some other FY'00 and FY'01 projects would have to fall off the table.

After a few minutes of additional discussion, the SCT agreed that the Corps should proceed with plans and specs for the raised spillway crest installation at John Day; it was further agreed that the SCT will discuss the ramifications of trying to accelerate this work, such that a prototype can be installed by FY'01, later in today's agenda in its review of the FY'00 and FY'01 CRFM programs. Kranda said he will discuss the feasibility of putting this project on the fast track with Corps technical staff and with FFDRWG, and will provide a report back at the next SCT meeting.

II. The Dalles Surface Bypass -- Blocked Trash Rack Proposal.

I mainly wanted to flag this item for further SCT discussion, said Hevlin; my understanding is that the Corps has set an end-of-November contract date to install a device at The Dalles to block the trash racks and, potentially, guide more fish into the sluiceway. NMFS' position is that we may not support the current design for this project; therefore, the Corps would be unable to let the contract by the end of November and would, therefore, be unable to do the test this spring. I just wanted to give the SCT a heads-up that this project is going to be discussed further at FFDRWG, and there may need to be some further modeling work done on it.

Rainey added that NMFS understands that the blocked trash rack work at The Dalles is on a fast track; NMFS supports this work, but the track is so fast that the Corps is just now getting started with some of the necessary modeling work. Neither the relevant Corps technical staff nor NMFS technical staff has had a chance to get a good look at the design; NMFS is concerned about potentially problematic hydraulic conditions above the "J" or "L"-shaped insert section, Rainey said. Essentially, we are asking the Corps to touch the right bases, from a modeling perspective -- they're just moving a little too fast. The main potential show-stopper is the question of whether or not we see very high downward velocities through the pier nose gaps, potentially entraining more fish into the turbines and compromising some of the benefits of this project, Rainey said. Hopefully, all of these concerns can be addressed prior to the contract award date, he added.

It was agreed that there will be further discussion of this item at the next SCT meeting.

III. Review of Proposed FY'01 CRFM Program.

Hevlin reminded the SCT that, two meetings ago, CRITFC submitted a list of items they wanted to have addressed; the SCT agreed to place several of those items into the FY'01 CRFM program. Those items have been added to the preliminary FY'01 CRFM list, he said. Also, said Hevlin, I recall that we agreed to develop a "drawdown track -- " the Corps has said that there are items in the FY'01 CRFM spreadsheet which, if the drawdown path is chosen, would not go forward, and the money designated for these items could provide the funding for preliminary engineering and design (PED) of drawdown. That drawdown PED is expected to cost approximately $8 million in FY'01. A Corps participant added.

As we work our way through this list, Hevlin said, I wanted to make a note of those items whose funding could be re-routed to drawdown engineering and design, if drawdown is the way

the region chooses to go. For example, there are some major dollars designated for auxiliary water supply improvements at the Lower Snake projects, he said; if the decision is made to draw these projects down, we won't be spending those funds on auxiliary water supply.

John Rowan noted that it is also possible that some of these funds could be re-designated for use at Lower Columbia projects; at this point, he said, it's just too early to know where those reprogrammed dollars might do the most good.

Basically, all I'm suggesting is that we add a sentence to the description of those items that might not be needed under a drawdown scenario, to the effect that this activity may not be needed if drawdown is the system configuration path chosen, Hevlin said. Perhaps we can begin by going through the list item by item, and getting people's thoughts about which projects would continue to be viable, and which would fall off the table, if the decision is made to draw down the Snake River projects, he suggested. We don't have to make a hard and fast decision today, he added, but we could at least start to record our thinking about individual line-items.

John Kranda noted that this version of the FY'01 CRFM spreadsheet (Enclosure E) is identical to the one that was handed out two months ago; the total estimated cost of the FY'01 program is $113 million. The FY'00 numbers included in this spreadsheet are more realistic than the numbers distributed previously (total FY'00 CRFM program cost: $77.5 million), and reflect the realities of the FY'00 budget Congress will be approving.

The group spent a few minutes going through the FY'01 project list item by item. The following is a list of items modified as a result of the discussion at today's meeting:

Lower Granite Juvenile Bypass Facility: it was agreed that, if drawdown is the path chosen, this project may no longer be needed.
Lower Granite Surface Bypass Program: it was agreed that, if drawdown is the path chosen, this project may no longer be needed, although further discussion of the potential interim benefits of this item is needed.
Lower Granite Additional Barge Moorage: it was agreed that, if drawdown is the path chosen, this project may no longer be needed.

Lower Granite Auxiliary Water Supply: it was agreed that, if drawdown is the path chosen, this project may no longer be needed.
Lower Granite Gas Fast Track: it was agreed that, if drawdown is the path chosen, this project may no longer be needed, although further discussion of the potential interim benefits of this item is needed.
Little Goose Trash Shear Boom: Mike Mason noted that the $1 million shown for this line-item in FY'01 probably will not be needed; it should be completed in FY'00.
Little Goose Auxiliary Water Supply:it was agreed that, if drawdown is the path chosen, this project may no longer be needed.
Little Goose Adult PIT Detectors: it was agreed that some placeholder dollars may be needed for this item in FY'01, although the source of funding has yet to be resolved.
Little Goose Gas Fast Track: it was agreed that, if drawdown is the path chosen, this project may no longer be needed, although further discussion of the potential interim benefits of this item is needed.
Lower Monumental Auxiliary Water Supply: it was agreed that, if drawdown is the path chosen, this project may no longer be needed; if drawdown is not the path chosen, the cost of this item in FY'01 would likely be closer to $6 million, with the balance needed in FY'02.
Lower Monumental Gas Fast Track: Mason noted that construction on this item will essentially be complete by FY'01; some further discussion of potential interim benefits is needed.
Ice Harbor Flow Deflectors: it was agreed that, if drawdown is the path chosen, this project may no longer be needed, although further discussion of the potential interim benefits of this item is needed.
Ice Harbor Auxiliary Water Supply: it was agreed that, if drawdown is the path chosen, this project may no longer be needed; if drawdown is not the path chosen, the cost of this item would be spread over two years.
Ice Harbor Adult Fallback/Juvenile Collection Channel: Mason said that, even if the drawdown path is chosen, his assumption is that this project would go forward, given its relatively low cost and the interim benefits it would convey.
McNary Orifice Shelters: Mason noted that it had been agreed previously that the orifice shelters project will not be going forward, so this line-item should be deleted.
John Day Extended-Length Screens: John Kranda noted that the number shown for this project in FY'01 ($7.6 million) is far too high; the Corps does not yet have a new FY'01 cost estimate for this line-item, but Kranda said it will be substantially less than the number shown in this draft of the spreadsheet.
John Day Emergency Auxiliary Water Supply: at CRITFC's request, it was agreed to add this line-item to the FY'01 spreadsheet.
John Day Gas Fast Track: Kranda said this new line-item will include near-field testing at John Day, designed to tell the Corps how effective flow deflectors are likely to be at this project. He added that this is a placeholder; no cost estimate is available at this point.

John Day Fish Ladder Temperature Control Prototype: at CRITFC's request, it was agreed to add this line-item to the FY'01 spreadsheet.
Bonneville Model Construction at WES: at CRITFC's request, it was agreed to add this line-item to the FY'01 spreadsheet.
Bonneville Research Facility: at CRITFC's request, it was agreed to add this line-item to the FY'01 spreadsheet; both Hevlin and Kranda noted that this project enjoys near-universal support among both the salmon managers and the SCT.
Lower Granite JBS Evaluation Interim Measures: it was agreed that, if drawdown is the path chosen, this project may no longer be needed, although further discussion of the potential interim benefits of this item is needed.
Little Goose Juvenile Facility Improvements: it was agreed that, if drawdown is the path chosen, this project may no longer be needed, although further discussion of the potential interim benefits of this item is needed.
Little Goose JBS Evaluation: it was agreed that, if drawdown is the path chosen, this project may no longer be needed, although further discussion of the potential interim benefits of this item is needed.
Lower Monumental JBS Evaluation: it was agreed that, if drawdown is the path chosen, this project may no longer be needed, although further discussion of the potential interim benefits of this item is needed.
Lower Monumental Outfall Relocation: Rainey noted that the Lower Monumental model is now nearly complete. The $1.9 million shown for this work in FY'01 would be used to finish the modeling and begin design work, although Mason added it is possible that construction could begin in FY'01 as well. It was noted that, if drawdown is the alternative chosen, this project may no longer be needed, although further discussion of the potential interim benefits of this item is needed.
Lower Monumental Tailrace Egress: at Jim Ceballos' suggestion, it was agreed to add this line-item to the FY'01 spreadsheet.
Ice Harbor JBS Evaluation: it was agreed that, if drawdown is the path chosen, this project may no longer be needed, although further discussion of the potential interim benefits of this item is needed.
McNary Adult Collection Channel Stoplogs: Mason observed that it is possible that the schedule for this item could be accelerated, such that construction could begin in FY'00 and finish in FY'01.
McNary Trash Shear Boom Design/Construction: Mason noted that there is a lot of uncertainty at the moment about whether or not a trash shear boom is the best solution to the debris problem at McNary; the $5.45 million shown for this item in FY'01 reflects the assumption that construction of the trash/shear boom would proceed, he said, but again, that assumption may no longer be accurate. Rainey suggested that this would be an appropriate item for discussion at next week's FFDRWG meeting in Walla Walla; it was so agreed.

In response to a question from Collis, Hevlin said he will develop a revised version of the CRFM measures spreadsheet, with a separate column for those items which will not or may not go forward under a drawdown scenario, prior to the next SCT meeting. Kranda noted that there is approximately $22 million in items in the current

spreadsheet that clearly would not go forward if drawdown is the path chosen by the region.

IV. Review of Draft Letter Requesting ISAB Review of The Dalles Survival Studies.

Hevlin asked that the other SCT members review the draft letter he has developed (Enclosure F) and provide any comments they may have to him over the next two to three days.

V. FFDRWG Updates.

Mason said there is no Walla Walla District FFDRWG update to report at today's meeting; Jim Ceballos of NMFS distributed a handout (Enclosure G) recapping the items discussed at the September 28 FFDRWG meeting.

VI. Next SCT Meeting Date and Agenda Items.

The next meeting of the System Configuration Team was set for Tuesday, October 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at NMFS' Portland offices (This meeting was subsequently rescheduled for Wednesday, December 8). Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.